

How Can I Be The Advocate My Loved One Needs Me To Be?

Seeing someone you love in an abusive situation is challenging; because you love them, you want to help, but it's hard to determine how best to do that. There are volunteer and professional victim advocates available for your loved one to connect with, but there are also some things you can do to support them and advocate for them.

First, let's talk about what a professional domestic violence victim advocate does.

What Does A Professional Domestic Violence Victim Advocate Do?

A **domestic violence victim advocate** is a professional who provides vital support to victims of domestic violence. [Domestic violence](#) includes physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse inflicted by a spouse, intimate partner, or cohabitant. The domestic violence victim advocate provides access to:

- Counseling resources and support groups
- Information about legal rights
- Medical care for physical and psychological recovery
- Economic and job assistance
- Safe and accessible housing
- Emotional and legal support in court
- Help with compensation applications
- Assistance in communicating with lawyers, family, and employers

What Steps Can I Take To Support and Advocate For My Loved One?

A professional advocate has access to many legal services and community resources, so those are areas where you may not be able to help.

However, you can give your loved one:

- **Emotional support** - being there when they need you, talking with them, providing unconditional love and encouragement. Sometimes, listening alone can be a powerful tool in helping victims; they are often lonely and isolated.
- **Economic assistance** - even if you don't have much money, you can help with food, gas, toiletries, etc. You can also give them rides to appointments or make phone calls. Domestic violence victims often have little freedom to handle their affairs, so that you can be a big help here.
- If the loved one being abused is a child, you can contact domestic violence professionals on their behalf. [Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline](#) is dedicated to meeting the physical, emotional, educational, and spiritual needs of abused, neglected and at-risk children. Efforts focused on prevention, intervention, treatment, and community outreach. The website offers a "Find a Local Affiliate" locator that provides information about programs. **You can reach the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at (800) 422-4453.**
- For an adult victim, you can contact [The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) (NDVH); NDVH is a 24/7 confidential resource hotline that provides emotional support, support groups, local resources, safety plans, etc. for those who are in a domestic violence situation, as well as a Help for Abusive Partners section. An online chat is also available. **You can contact NDVH at (800) 766-7233.** For more helpline information and resources, visit the [NAMI](#) (National Alliance On Mental Illness) website.

[Bridges Domestic Violence Center](#) offers resources and support so you can free yourself and your loved ones from danger while living a safe, independent, and happy life. Our [services](#) include temporary shelter, crisis intervention, support groups, court and child advocacy, and more. Call us at (615) 599 5777 or message us [here](#).

We are a member agency of United Way of Greater Nashville.